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SUBJECT: Next Steps For Joint Verification Team

REF: KINSHASA 886

¶1. (SBU) Summary: Goma Poloff spoke with members of the Goma-based Joint Verification Team (JVT) to determine next steps following the GDRC's formal request to investigate Rwandan support of the CNDP (reftel). The JVT team leader said that the process, from submission of the request until a final report is issued, should last 3-4 weeks. The most recent verification mission, which is still technically open, was in February 2008 in response to Rwandan allegations of FARDC-FDLR collaboration. End Summary.

The JVT Process

¶2. (SBU) On October 17, Goma Poloff met separately with Sosthene Yotto, the AU's representative to the Goma Joint Verification Team (JVT), and with Lieutenant Colonel Tapas Masri, the JVT team leader, to discuss next steps in response to DRC Foreign Minister Mbusa's October 9 request (reftel) to activate the Joint Verification Mechanism (JVM). Masri said that Mbusa's letter to the SRSG represented a formal request to the Joint Verification Secretariat (JVS) to examine whether the allegations were within the realm of the JVM. (Note: the JVS provides direct support to the envoy-level Joint Verification Commission. End Note.)

¶3. (SBU) If the JVS determines that the complaint warrants an investigation, it will alert the JVM team leader. Masri predicted that this would happen around October 25. Masri will then convene the JVT to establish methods, timeline, locations and logistics (provided by MONUC) for the verification mission. The team will execute the mission within five days of the alert, normally completing its work in one day, although it can take more time, if needed. The team leader then issues an interim report, with a final report five days afterwards. From initial submission of the allegations until the final report, the timeline is usually 3-4 weeks.

Composition of the JVT

¶4. (SBU) The African Union delegation to the JVT currently consists of two Beninese and three Kenyans. Rwanda and the DRC are represented by delegations of three to four individuals, while MONUC provides one military observer (Masri). When there is no on-going investigation, the AU delegation has very little to do. Rwandan and Congolese JVT members carry out their regular "day jobs" on their respective sides of the border, participating in the occasional JVT meeting as required and when a verification mission is scheduled. (Note: Both the GDRC and AU have individuals on the JVT that also attend the weekly Joint Monitoring Group meetings. End Note.) Meetings are supposed to take place every two weeks, although the Rwandans did not attend the October 2 meeting due to security concerns about Goma. There is a similar team in Bukavu.

Last Verification: February 2008

15. (SBU) The Goma team last carried out a verification mission in February 2008 in Rutshuru in response to GOR allegation of FARDC collaboration with the FDLR. The mission was unable to confirm the allegations. Rwanda requested that the mission be continued by helicopter overflight. MONUC asked the Rwandan side to provide locations to over fly, since Rutshuru is a large area. To date, the investigation is technically still open, pending Rwanda's submission of desired overflight areas.

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